

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL NOVEMBER 21, 2017

The Jasper County Council met this date at 7:00 P.M. C.S.T. in the Commissioners Room, Suite 202, of the Jasper County Courthouse, located at 115 West Washington Street, Rensselaer, Indiana, with the following members present: Rein Bontreger, Stephen Jordan, Andrew Andree, Gary Fritts, Paul Norwine and Brett Risner. Also present was Deputy Auditor Tina Porter. Please let the record show that Gerrit DeVries was absent. Mr. Bontreger called the meeting to order and those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Andree.

MINUTES: Mr. Bontreger stated that a correction was made to the spelling of Mr. Lehe's name on page three. Mr. Andree stated that he was not in attendance at the October 24, 2017 meeting. Mr. Fritts made a motion to approve the minutes with the mentioned corrections. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

JAMES STRADLING / INDIAN TRAILS SKILL-UP GRANT: Mr. Stradling was present and explained that Indian Trails is the career cooperative for ten schools across Carroll, White, Jasper, Newton and Pulaski counties. This was previously called the vocational cooperative and is now called career and technical education. He stated that his responsibilities are to coordinate the vocational programs and career technical education in welding, agriculture, auto service, construction and building trades and health careers for these ten schools. He provides administrative and logistical support for the teachers. The Skill-Up Grant is a regional three-to-one matching grant provided by the Governor to try to come up with better ways to get our workforce trained. He has determined that the top two employment needs in the area are welding and healthcare. He said, according to the census data, our counties are shrinking in population. Another goal of the grant is to figure out how to get high school graduates to stay in the County once they've received their career training. He's been talking to local employers about allowing high school students internship opportunities. He is also open to holding classes for adults after 3:00 when school is dismissed, on the week-ends or during the summer. The grant money will be used to pay for the teachers, provide awareness for elementary-aged students regarding available opportunities in Jasper County, purchase equipment and pay for before and after school programs and summer camps. He said that White and Newton counties have committed \$100,000.00 and he is asking the same of Jasper, Carroll and Pulaski Counties. If each county contributes \$100,000.00, Indian Trails will receive a total of \$2,000,000.00. Mr. Norwine expressed concern that this will be awarded to Indian Trails as a separate entity rather than awarded to counties. He asked how this will affect Kankakee Valley since they are in a different cooperative. Mr. Stradling responded that students can cross school district lines and attend classes at any of the schools. He said they will accept students from Kankakee Valley. Mr. Andree asked Mr. Norwine if Kankakee Valley already has welding and building trades and Mr. Norwine replied that they do. He then asked if it would be necessary for those students to travel if they already have the program at their school. Mr. Stradling stated that they probably wouldn't travel for those programs but could benefit from programs that Kankakee Valley does not offer. Kankakee Valley also offers a healthcare program. Mr. Norwine stated that he's more comfortable with the money being based county-wide. Mr. Stradling replied that Newton County expressed the same concern; however, the challenge they run in to is that there are Newton County students that come to Rensselaer for the welding program. Mr. Norwine stated that over half of the students don't belong to Mr. Stradling's cooperative. Mr. Bontreger told Mr. Stradling that this proposal would need to be presented to the Commissioners. He replied that, with the way the schedule worked out, he will be presenting to the Commissioners on December 4th. Mr. Bontreger asked how many students successfully complete the program and how will the County know if it was a worthy investment. Mr. Stradling replied that the metrics that will be used will be the number of kids that do an internship that stay and work in the community, such as the Certified Nursing Assistants staying to work at Franciscan, for example. Mr. Bontreger stated that, one of the problems that he sees with his business is that it's hard to find people that want to come to work, which is more of a character issue. Mr. Stradling replied that, during elementary and middle school, they emphasize "soft" skills, such as showing up for work on time, being dressed appropriately and following directions, etc. Mr. Risner mentioned that the next Council meeting is not until December 19th. Mr. Stradling stated that he will request an extension of a couple days. Mr. Bontreger asked when the timeline got established and stated that he doesn't like trying to squeeze something in when the Council hasn't had time to process it. This year, with budgets, everything has been tight. Mr. Stradling replied that the Governor set the due date. It was first introduced in July, but not set in stone until late September/early October. Mr. Stradling has spent time since then trying to secure internships with employers.

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 21, 2017**

JAMES STRADLING / INDIAN TRAILS SKILL-UP GRANT CONT'D: The employers that have agreed so far to the internships are Franciscan Hospital for Health Care, Chief's and Talbert's. Mr. Norwine mentioned that the schools already receive a certain amount of money per student through a grant based on the vocational classes. Mr. Stradling replied that it wouldn't be a grant, but rather money that the superintendent receives to pay the teachers' salaries. Mr. Fritts asked what the \$2,000,000.00 actually pays for. Mr. Stradling replied that it will pay for a lot of the equipment upgrades. Mr. Bontreger asked who helps establish and oversees the budget for Indian Trails. Mr. Stradling replied that Twin Lakes is his Local Education Agency. He gets audited when Twin Lakes gets audited. He said the Treasurer at Twin Lakes does all his banking. Mr. Fritts asked Mr. Stradling what he estimates his costs would be for the Certified Nursing Assistant portion of the program. He replied that he will need to purchase hospital beds, CPR masks, blood pressure cuffs, wheelchairs, etc. He said that most of the courses are dual credits, meaning they get high school and college credit, along with a certification. Mr. Andree asked if welding includes other building trades. Mr. Stradling replied that, for this grant, they were only allowed to pick two and they chose healthcare and welding. Mr. Andree asked if the rest of the state is receiving the same pitch from other career cooperative directors. He replied that, at his last meeting, there were only two other directors there. He's unsure if it's being handled by Economic Development Directors, manufacturers or other entities. Mr. Risner asked Mr. Stradling if he was aware of what fund the other Councils will be using. He replied that he did not ask, but did hear the word CREDIT(?). Mr. Bontreger explained to Mr. Stradling that the Commissioners would be the ones to enter in to the agreement and the Council would be the ones to appropriate the funding.

CHRIS WOODCOCK / VETERANS OFFICE DONATION: Mr. Bontreger presented Mr. Woodcock with a personal donation from the Council members in the amount of \$650.00 to be used towards the American Veterans Traveling Tribute Traveling Vietnam Wall.

SHERIFF RISNER / ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION: Advertised in the County General Fund, Sheriff, Part-Time Security was \$5,000.00. Sheriff Risner was present and stated that they've run out of funding for the part-time Courthouse Security Officers. There are three part-time Officers and one full-time Officer. He said there have been events that have caused them to work extra hours, such as the week-end at St. Joseph's College and the Little Cousin Jasper Festival. Officer in Charge, Jennifer Rusk, has been called to work in the Courts, which resulted in more hours for the part-time employees. They've also had an increased number of inmate transports. Courthouse Security runs an average of \$4,600.00 for the month. The part-time employees have to maintain a certain number of certified training hours, which amounts to hours worked. Mr. Fritts mentioned using Innkeeper's Tax to pay for security at the festivals. Mr. Bontreger stated that he's requested that Tourism budget money for security and he will continue to do so. Mr. Andree made a motion to approve the additional request in the amount of \$5,000.00 for part-time security. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Number 2017-11A**

SHERIFF RISNER / HEALTHCARE COSTS: Sheriff Risner stated that Sargent Kevin Lewis put together a statistical analysis report regarding the increased insurance premiums and the resulting loss of buying power. He said that, due to this, he anticipates losing several well-trained employees over the next year. Mr. Fritts asked if the ones that have left went to municipalities. Sheriff Risner replied that he's had one go to the railroad police, one is now selling insurance, and one has gone to DeMotte Police Department. Mr. Fritts replied that it's tough for counties to compete with the insurance market and municipalities. Sheriff Risner expressed concern for his Officers having a hard time making ends meet when the County is unable to raise wages. Mr. Fritts stated that he believes we are one of the higher paid counties locally. Sheriff Risner said White County is ahead of us, as well as St. John at \$75,000 for a first class Officer and DeMotte at \$56,000.00-\$58,000.00 with a coverage area of four square miles. Sheriff Risner told the Council members of an incident that happened in Allen County where officers were exposed to a drug and had to receive medical treatment. Mr. Fritts told Sheriff Risner that, although he communicates to the Council very clearly, he says he's speaking for every Council member when he says that they have the utmost respect for what he does and the role Sheriff Risner has in the County.

Sheriff Risner stated that, according to the manpower analysis from the State, they are still under staffed. Mr. Fritts asked how a Road Officer's salary compares to a State Trooper's salary.

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 21, 2017**

SHERIFF RISNER / HEALTHCARE COSTS CONT'D: Sheriff Risner replied that they recently got a raise and they are in the \$70,000.00 range; however, they are having trouble filling the positions due to a degradation in the support for law enforcement.

CIRCUIT COURT / ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION: Advertised in the County General Fund, Circuit Court, Law Books was \$5,000.00. Mr. Jordan made a motion to approve the request in the amount of \$5,000.00. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance 2017-11B**

TRANSFER REQUEST / SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT: Mr. Fritts made a motion to approve a transfer in the amount of \$350.00 from Education Film and Material to Travel. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried.

TRANSFER REQUESTS / SURVEYOR: Mr. Risner made a motion to approve a transfer in the amount of \$1,500.00 from Garage and Motor to Equipment. Mr. Andree seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Norwine made a motion to approve a transfer in the amount of \$1,500.00 from Equipment Repairs to Equipment. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried.

TRANSFER REQUEST / COURTHOUSE: Mr. Andree made a motion to approve a transfer in the amount of \$1,200.00 from Courthouse Supplies to Equipment Repairs. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

SALARY ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Mr. Bontreger stated that this amendment for the Building Inspector is due to an increased number of inspections this year. He stated that it's his understanding Mrs. Scheurich is looking to get a part-time building inspector lined up for 2018. Mr. Bontreger mentioned to Mr. Andree that it might be a good idea for him to be involved in the selection process. There was discussion about the inspection fee. Mr. Risner made a motion to approve the Salary Ordinance increasing the Inspector an additional \$500.00 for a total of \$2,500.00. Mr. Andree seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE: Mr. Norwine asked about the report in the paper about a company that offered to pay off St. Joseph's Colleges' debt and lease the property back to the school. Mr. Monfort stated that, from what was conveyed to him, the article in the paper was accurate. The company has moved on and found another site. Mr. Monfort stated that many of St. Joseph's Board members have now resigned.

There being no further business and no public comment, Mr. Risner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Rein O. Bontreger, President

ATTEST:

Kimberly K. Grow, Auditor of Jasper County